

REMARKS

Applicants submit a Request for Continued Examination along with a Petition and Fee for One-Month Extension of Time.

Applicants submit an Excess Claim Fee Payment Letter for four (4) independent claims and three (3) excess total claims.

Claims 1-3, 6-13, 16-22, 25-28, 30-34, 38-46 and 49-66 are all of the claims presently pending in the application. Claims 63-66 have been added to provide more varied protection for the claimed invention and to claim additional features of the invention.

It is noted that the claim amendments are made only for more particularly pointing out the invention, and not for distinguishing the invention over the prior art, narrowing the claims or for any statutory requirements of patentability. Further, Applicants specifically state that no amendment to any claim herein should be construed as a disclaimer of any interest in or right to an equivalent of any element or feature of the amended claim.

In the Final Office Action dated May 25, 2004 claims 1-3, 6-10, 21, 22, 26-28, 30-34, 38, 40-42, 59, 61 and 62 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as obvious over U.S. Patent No. 6,252,254 to Soules et al. (hereinafter, Soules), in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,847,507 to Butterworth et al. (hereinafter, Butterworth), U.S. Patent No. 5,798,536 to Tsutsui, and U.S. Patent No. 5,877,558 to Nakamura et al. (hereinafter, Nakamura). Claims 11-13, 16-20, 39 and 60 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as unpatentable over Soules, Butterworth, Tsutsui, and Nakamura as applied to the claims above, and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,153,123 to Hampden-Smith et al. (hereinafter, Hampden-Smith). Claim 25 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as unpatentable over Soules, Butterworth, Tsutsui, and Nakamura as applied to the claims above, and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,166,489 to Thompson et al. (hereinafter, Thompson). Claims 46, 49, and 50 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as unpatentable over

Soules, Butterworth, Tsutsui, and Nakamura as applied to the claims above, and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,340,824 to Komoto et al. (hereinafter, Komoto). Claims 43-45 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as unpatentable over Soules, Butterworth, Tsutsui, and Nakamura as applied to the claims above, and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,998,925 to Shimizu et al. (hereinafter Shimizu). Claims 51-58 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as unpatentable over Soules, Butterworth, Tsutsui, and Nakamura as applied to the claims above, and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,335,217 to Chiyo et al. (hereinafter Chiyo).

Reconsideration in view of these newly added claims is respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing, Applicants submit that claims 1-3, 6-13, 16-22, 25-28, 30-34, 38-46 and 49-66, all of the claims presently pending in the application, are patentably distinct over the prior art of record and are in condition for allowance. The Examiner is respectfully requested to pass the above application to issue at the earliest possible time.

Should the Examiner find the application to be other than in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned at the local telephone number listed below to discuss any other changes deemed necessary in a telephonic or personal interview.

Serial No. 09/654,501
Docket No. T36-124990M/RS
NGB.185

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The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any deficiency in fees or to credit any overpayment in fees to Attorney's Deposit Account No. 50-0481.

Respectfully Submitted,

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